

Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) formally asked the Senate Committee on the Judiciary to ask Supreme Court nominee Elena Kagan about her views on abortion rights. The request came about because Slaughter, a Co-Chair of the House Pro-Choice Caucus, believes that the lack of a judicial record from Kagan leaves her stance on abortion largely unknown.

"It's impossible to overstate how important it is for this country to protect a woman's right to choose," said Slaughter, one of the longest-serving female members of Congress and a long-time leader for women's rights. "Many of our rights were eroded during the previous Administration and the vote earlier this year on health care reform exposed the efforts to play politics with the rights of women. For that reason, it's especially important that the next Supreme Court justice take a strong position on protecting a women's right to choose. It's my hope that the Senate will respectfully ask Elena Kagan for her views on this critical topic."

A copy of the text of [the letter sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee](#) is below

May 18, 2010

The Honorable Patrick H. Leahy  
Sessions  
Chairman  
United States Senate  
Committee on the Judiciary  
Judiciary

224 Dirksen Senate Office Building 224 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jeff  
  
Ranking Member  
United States Senate  
Committee on the

Dear Chairman Leahy,

I want to express my sincere appreciation for your continued commitment to ensuring that the next Associate Justice of the Supreme Court will hold the Constitution to the highest standard. It is with tremendous pride that I write to you regarding President Obama's nomination of a woman, Solicitor General Elena Kagan, to the Supreme Court of the United States.

Solicitor General Kagan is the second distinguished woman to be considered for the highest court within the past year. This historic achievement is a testament to the progress women have made in recent years. In order for the Supreme Court to be truly representative of the citizens of the United States, we must increase the number of women on the highest court.

As we do not have a judicial record to review for Solicitor General Kagan, it is imperative that the Senate Judiciary Committee fully question the nominee with respect to women's rights. The emergence of a memorandum co-authored by Solicitor General Kagan during her time as a White House aide in the Clinton Administration regarding abortion is troubling. As Co Chair of the Pro Choice Caucus, I urge you and the Committee to keep the constitutional right to choose at the forefront of your minds as you question Solicitor General Kagan.

Following the contentious debate regarding federal funding for abortion leading up to the historic passage of health care reform, it is essential that the constitutionality of a woman's right to choose remain clear, unwavering and longstanding. The recent passage of several state laws designed to undermine the strength of *Roe v. Wade* further signifies the intense nature of these issues. As these laws are being brought to the courts, it is critical that we have a full understanding of Solicitor General Kagan's interpretation of the constitutional right to choose. The next Supreme Court Justice must be unwavering in their support of judicial precedent with respect to women's rights.

In light of Solicitor General Elena Kagan's nomination, I respectfully request that the Committee on the Judiciary work to ensure that the next Supreme Court Justice will uphold the constitutional right for women to choose what to do with their bodies. I appreciate your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Louise M. Slaughter

Member of Congress